WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR BOY

EDMUND THOMAS

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WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR BOY

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EDMUND THOMAS

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WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR BOY

BY

EDMUND THOMAS

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE
BY
DR. A. E. WINSHIP

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DEDICATED TO

THE AMERICAN BOY

FOREWORD

America is the one great nation that faces all problems, civic, industrial and social. Switzerland and Australia are merely vest pocket editions of problem-solving nations. In America all problems, individual and socialistic, are gigantic.

The future of America will depend entirely upon how we face these problems. If we plunge at them with Titanic fury, we are liable to collapse at any time, and the more magnificent we are the more suddenly we go to the depths.

America will find no safe harbor unless she charts the seas for derelicts and icebergs as well as for rocks and shoals.

There must be no conceit that the only dangers are those that are anchored in conventionalities and traditions.

The great problem of America is the making of boys manly and girls womanly. Nothing can save America but the heightening of personal honor and individual purity. Deeper than action of legislature, court and executive is that of uplifting all the people of the future through the noblest inspiration of the young people.

There is no nobler mission than the attempt to solve the problem of personal honor and purity of the young people.

There can be no higher, holier message than to the young men and women, on the one hand warning against personal danger, and on the other inspiring

them to save their associates from the degradation of impurity of speech, thought and life.

There is no denying the fact that we are reaping a frightful harvest from tares sown by men in all walks of life from the ministry to the saloon, through witty, smutty stories that have been vulgar and sensual.

What is known as sex hygiene is among boys and girls what spraying is to noxious insects in bacteria, what inoculation is in the case of epidemic and contagious disease.

There are few boys born in the Twentieth Century who will not know all that is fascinating about sex life. It may be unveiled to them in a pure and noble manner, or it may be divulged in a crude way by older boys, or it may be

hurled at them in coarse and vulgar word or deed. It would seem to be every way desirable that it should come in the right way by the right people at the right time.

It is this belief that has led to the making of this book.

A. E. Winship.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	Is This Your Boy?	1
II.	Whose the Responsibility?	10
III.	That Which Must Be Told	20
IV.	The Time of the Telling	30
V.	The Basis of Confidence	41
VI.	Dangers	51
VII.	Safeguards	61
VIII.	Standards of Judgment	73
IX.	Habits	81
X.	Activities	90
XI.	Daydreams	100
XII.	Companionships	108
XIII.	The Absent Boy	118
XIV.	Compensations	129

WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR BOY

CHAPTER I

IS THIS YOUR BOY?

With an expression strained and tense, he waited at the manager's desk. In his capacity of errand boy he had been intrusted with a verbal message, and with painful realization of his incapacity, accentuated by a morbid self-consciousness, he was concentrating every faculty on its correct delivery.

As he stood, awaiting his turn, a panic seemed to take possession of him, the pupils of his eyes dilated, his breath came in short gasps, and an involuntary movement of the lips indicated that he was striving to gain a measure of self-confidence by assuring himself that he

retained a parrot-like recollection of the message.

The "errand-boy" was thirty-one years old, and yet he had the peculiar characteristics of undeveloped youth, which would still stamp him as a boy at fifty.

At sixteen he was graduated from a grammar school and the impression he created when he commenced business life was distinctly favorable. A boy of high principles, with some ambition, and a fair amount of industry, he gained the good-will of those with whom he came in contact. He was neither better nor worse than thousands of boys who start life at his age. His early environment had been that of the average American boy; his educational equipment was at least sufficient for the

work allotted to him. In a word, he seemed to have a fair start, and an even chance of ultimate success.

At first, everything went well. Those to whom he was directly responsible found him an earnest and conscientious worker, willing and, if anything, a trifle over anxious to please, and felt justified in advancing him, as occasion offered, to minor positions of responsibility.

The first opportunity for advancement came within a year. A vacancy occurred, and because the boy had been diligent and painstaking in the performance of his duties, it was felt that he had earned the right to promotion. Another opportunity followed rapidly on the heels of the first and although he was not in direct line for this position,

the same reasons prompted his second promotion.

He was what is regarded as a "good" boy—he did not smoke nor swear; he was truthful and, so far as was known, he had no bad habits. Great expectations were entertained for him, and yet to the surprise and disappointment of his friends and associates, he did not continue to make good.

It was not that the work in this position was beyond him; his previous training should have enabled him to master it without difficulty; it was not that he was denied instruction and advice: both were to be had freely for the asking; it was simply that he seemed to have lost his grip on himself.

It was observed that he was subject to fits of absent-mindedness—long peri-

ods during which his attention wandered and he brooded on things wholly unconnected with his duties. From these abstractions he roused himself with a start and applied himself to his work with redoubled energy, seeking, apparently, to make up for lost time. A shyness, hitherto unnoticed, became evident and with it a pronounced disinclination to meet a steady gaze. At a simple question he blushed like a girl, and his whole attitude was timorous and apologetic.

As time passed, the periods of abstraction became more frequent. An enfeebled mentality resulted; he lost the power of concentration, and the most elementary propositions were soon utterly beyond his grasp. His memory, too, was defective, and details

of his daily work, the doing of which should have become automatic, were overlooked at the proper time, if not entirely forgotten. For some reason not apparent he was incapable of measuring up to the requirements.

"John is a good boy," said his employers, "it is a pity that he—" The sentence was unfinished, but the look of intelligence that passed from one to the other supplied all that was missing. The trouble, if not absolutely known, was at least shrewdly guessed. The symptoms too plainly suggested the diagnosis.

The qualities, however, which had brought the boy into favorable notice at the start were still in evidence. A strong desire to do right was apparent. His habits of punctuality were kept up.

When not lost in daydreams, he was as earnest as ever in his work. He did not join in the gossip of the office, and he kept aloof from the horseplay and the buffoonery indulged in by boys of his own age.

It was to this, supplemented perhaps by the fact that there was a pathetic appeal in his ineffectual strivings, that he owed his retention on the pay roll of the firm. He was allowed to resume first one and then another of the subordinate positions, but when in due course he arrived at the bottom—his starting point of three years previous—it was found that even in that position he was incapable. His duties had been of a clerical nature, and there was now nothing involving mental work that he could do. A consciousness of his

liability to err made errors inevitable, while the frequency of his mistakes served to aggravate his mental confusion. All self-confidence was gone, and with repeated failures came a lack of self-respect, which manifested itself in his personal habits as well as in his attitude towards others, with the result that he became an object not only of pity but of aversion.

At this point a place was found for him as messenger. It was another step downward, but his only chance.

The "boy" still carries packages, and performs other duties of a more or less mechanical nature. Careful to the point of fear about the smallest thing, he knows neither relief nor rest until it is done, and yet his attitude is that of one who anticipates admonition or mer-

its reproof. And he will never be other than he is.

At sixteen, a boy of potentialities and promise; in manhood, hopeless.

CHAPTER II

WHOSE THE RESPONSIBILITY?

Good fathers! Bad boys!

These terms are so common in their use that they find general acceptance, and that some bad boys are the sons of good fathers does not even suggest a doubt as to the correctness of the classifications. Yet it may not be idle to consider whether it is necessary to refer to a father as good, and whether a boy is properly labeled bad.

The parent oyster allows its offspring, the larvæ, to take their chance on the surface of the water with the multitude of other creatures which swarm there. The larvæ may be de-

voured by their natural enemies, or they may swim away, perhaps five miles from their place of birth, sink to the bottom, and, attaching themselves to any rocky surface, proceed to develop into oysters: the parent oyster neither knows nor cares.

But man is not an oyster.

Some fish—sardines and mackerel, for example, having selected a suitable place for spawning, deposit their eggs, and fertilize them. This done, they assume no further responsibility for their offspring. They leave the hatching to the heat of the sun and the action of the waves. The fry must look out for themselves, and escape, if they can, the voracity of larger fish of other species and the cannibal instincts of their own progenitors.

But man is neither sardine nor mackerel.

The cowbird and the cuckoo surreptitiously lay their eggs in the nests of smaller birds, to whom they delegate the labor of incubation, of feeding, and of caring for the nestlings until fledged.

But man is neither cowbird nor cuckoo.

There are some men—too many by far—who are as elementary in parental instincts as the oyster and the fish, and quite as willing to shirk parental obligations as the cowbird.

Some give themselves no concern whatsoever regarding their children—caring neither for their spiritual nor for their temporal welfare; but these, happily, are few.

Others feel that in making due pro-

vision for the elemental needs of the child's existence—food to eat, clothing to wear, and a house for shelter—they have done their whole duty. For the rest, they are content to leave to a paternal government the secular education of the child, and to the priest or parson its moral and ethical development.

Such fathers are just one remove from the cowbird and the cuckoo.

But, fortunately for the boys and for the future of the race, there are some parents who are unwilling to delegate any part of their duty.

The child has been given existence; the conditions necessary to his continued existence are assumed; it remains to teach him the meaning of life and how to live it. This they conceive to be

the privilege of the father, as, also, his sacred obligation. This point of view involves setting before the child examples worthy of imitation, for his first conceptions of life are based on observation, and as he sees life in his own environment so he believes it to be. It involves firmness and discipline, for the cardinal lesson of childhood is obedience. It involves never-failing patience, for the lesson of life is not easily learned. It involves tact to discern when to give reproof and when to forbear, for encouragement is often more effective than admonition. And, above all, it involves a quick and intelligent sympathy which grows and broadens as the child develops.

If, then, a man possess all these attributes coupled with the unselfishness

that leads him to subordinate his own comfort to that of his children, is he not a good father?

Let us see.

The child comes into existence, so far as we know, not from any desire on its part; its wishes are not consulted and it is incapable of exercising any choice in the matter. Its birth is the result of the complete union of the parents—the natural consequence of their union in conjugal relationship. Hence it commences life with a balance on the credit side of the ledger. It has inherent rights to maintenance, affectionate care, counsel, and protection—all of which are comprehended in the simple term father.

These rights are not universally recognized; it has been customary from

the days of the Roman fathers to place the emphasis on filial duty rather than on parental obligation. Nevertheless, parental obligations exist, and it is only when man renders them in fullest measure that he is a father; when he does less he is a defaulter. This point of view may be helpful in reaching a conclusion as to bad boys.

So-called bad boys are not hard to find. They abound in the streets; their cases are tried in the juvenile courts; they fill the reformatories; and, grown a little older, they crowd the prisons.

But they have always been bad?

On the contrary, if it be true that "all men are created equal," may it not be true that all children are born good? The hardened criminal awaiting the chair was once an innocent child inca-

pable of evil thoughts or deed. Did the change come suddenly? Was there a sharp dividing line between the good and the bad? Or, were the evil tendencies, like the good, of gradual growth?

In the sense that bad means "wanting in good qualities, whether moral or physical," there are no bad boys! There are countless examples of what is known as youthful depravity. But depravity simply means that there has been bad training to pervert or turn aside tendencies otherwise good. The boy is a center of unbounded energy and activity, and badness has been defined as "energy given the wrong direction." The possibility of vice may be latent. This is the case with horses, but a horse that becomes vicious is said to be badly trained; he is not called a

bad horse. This is not less true when stated in regard to the boy.

It is obvious, then, in determining what you should tell your boy that some revision of previous classifications is desirable. A clear and distinct conception of fatherhood is the indispensable condition to instruction, and the instruction can be effective only as it implies a recognition of the fact that the boy ultimately is good or bad according as he has been trained.

The boy in the opening chapter possessed a strong desire to do right which manifested itself in his daily routine. He emerged from his most humiliating defeats, still manifesting a vital force that would not down, that could not be quenched. He was the unfortunate victim of a habit which had made him un-

true to himself, which had sapped his manhood and had rendered him incapable and inefficient. Yet, at the critical period of his life, a word would have doubtless been sufficient to free him of the terrible heritage he was compelled to carry forward.

CHAPTER III

THAT WHICH MUST BE TOLD

Educators point with pride to the ever broadening scheme of popular instruction, and assert, not without reason, that never before has so much been taught of value to the child, to the man, and to the woman as there is to-day, and that never before has it been so well taught.

Yet, while it is true that education is no longer restricted to the favored few, and that the curriculum of the public school, instead of being limited to a dry and arid cultivation of the "three R's," has been so enriched as to furnish a cultural acquaintance at least with al-

most every branch of knowledge—an enrichment which some maintain threatens with mental dyspepsia those required to absorb and assimilate it—it is equally true that the topic of paramount importance to the boy finds in it no place.

In all the teaching, extending from the playroom of the kindergarten to the gates of the college, absolute silence is maintained as to the origin of human life, and the processes underlying the reproduction of the human species.

In zoology the boy learns something of the genital organs of fish; in botany, something of the pollination of plants; but when it comes to human physiology, he finds man presented with no reference to this essential potentiality.

But grammar teaches him that boy,

man, husband, and father are masculine; girl, woman, wife, and mother, feminine. Is it sufficient that here shall begin and end his instruction in sex?

The policy of silence on this important topic is not confined to the class room. It has been consistently adhered to alike by pulpit and press; while in the home, with few exceptions, the subject has always been either tacitly avoided or deliberately evaded.

"This policy," says Havelock Ellis, "has been so firmly established that the theory of it has never been clearly argued out. So far as it exists at all it is a theory that walks on two feet pointed opposite ways: sex things must not be talked about because they are 'dirty'; sex things must not be talked about because they are 'sacred.'"

Another author, writing more than thirty years earlier, says: "In whatever concerns the subject of sex, customs are blindly considered sacred, and evils deemed inevitable. The mass of mankind seems moved with anger, fear, or shame, by any effort made to consider seriously this fundamental idea. It must necessarily come forward, however, in the progress of events, as the subject of primary importance. As society advances, as principles of justice and humanity become firmly established, as science and industry prepare the way for the most perfect command of the material world, it will be found that the time has come for the serious consideration of this first and last question in human welfare; for the subject of sex in its com-

plete human significance will then present itself as the great aid or obstacle to farther progress." [1]

That this time has arrived there can be no doubt. Each epoch in the world's existence has to its credit some great advance in religion, in learning, in art, or in industry, by which it is characterized and distinguished. These are the milestones of chronology. The twentieth century will be marked by future historians as the beginning of an era of world-wide recognition of the value and importance of prevention. The prevention of disease by inoculation and sanitation; the prevention of bigotry, superstition, and class-hatred by the spread of education; the prevention of immorality by the establishment of

[1] ELIZABETH BLACKWELL—Counsel to Parents.

high standards of purity and chastity.

It is with this last phase of prevention that society is vitally concerned: the creation of correct standards and the pursuit of essential ideals.

But standards of morality can become effective factors in a boy's life only as they are founded on absolute knowledge, and it is an encouraging sign of our times that the necessity for imparting this knowledge is being more and more recognized. It is no longer a question of whether something shall be told, but rather of what must be told, and how it shall be imparted.

On these points, however, there is a wide divergence of opinion. Yet if the principle of prevention be kept clearly in view, the problem is not difficult of solution. Sooner or later, the source of life

as springing from the difference of sex will become known to the boy. If this knowledge comes to him in a secret way, possibly accompanied by obscene language and lewd suggestions, questionings resulting in impure thoughts take possession of him, and these in turn impel him toward the unclean act.

The ultimate end, then, of the proposed instruction must be to safeguard the boy from acquiring the habit of unclean thought in order that he may not be impelled toward the unclean act. This is best reached by putting him in possession of true knowledge just as soon as he is ready for it; by so filling his mind with pure thoughts that there shall be no room for the conception of impure ideas.

The boy must be told simply and nat-

urally the genesis of life and of reproduction. This will form the subject of his first questionings and the knowledge imparted will be the basis of his further instruction. Incidentally, in connection with lessons on neatness of person and dress, he must be taught the importance of keeping the sexual organ absolutely clean, and at the same time tactfully cautioned against handling it unnecessarily. Later on, when the instinct of sex is about to manifest itself, the nature and function of the sexual organ must be explained. There must be no half-teaching, no half-truths. "Forewarned is forearmed"—but he who is only half taught is ill-prepared for this battle of life. With the background of his previous instruction in the origin of life, he can now be shown that the organ of gen-

eration is provided for a very special purpose, and that to use it for any other is degrading, debasing, and unnatural.

These facts constitute the fundamental teaching for the boy. To lay out a course of instruction equally suitable for all boys is impossible: the father who is in full sympathy with his own boy will perceive how much or how little to tell.

"I do not say," says Ellice Hopkins,[2] "that pure knowledge will necessarily save; but I do say that the pitcher that is full of clear spring water has no room for foul. I do say that you have gained a great step, if in answer to the offer of enlightenment which he is certain to receive, you have enabled your boy to ac-

[2] ELLICE HOPKINS—The Power of Womanhood.

quit himself of the rough objurgation: 'Oh, hold your jaw! I know all about that, and I don't want any of your rot.' "

CHAPTER IV

THE TIME OF THE TELLING

Sex questions are no longer taboo. The right of the child to know all about himself—hitherto denied him—is now conceded. Therefore, since countless generations of children have been wronged vicarious atonement must be made to the child of to-day by putting him into instant and full possession of the facts, regardless of his ability to apprehend them. This process of reasoning is doubtless responsible for the idea that the instruction of the boy in matters of sex should commence at the cradle, and that the minutest details of the physiological processes of life and

reproduction may with propriety be revealed to him almost as soon as he shall have acquired the ability to walk and talk; its weakness lies in its failure to take into consideration the capacity of the child's mind. But extreme measures follow closely in the wake of all great movements.

Scarcely less extreme is the view held by many that this teaching may properly begin at the age of five or six, and that botany and zoölogy should be made the media of instruction. In a book purporting to be written for boys of this age, may be found the following: "When they (the father and mother natures) are found together in the same flower, the pollen of flower dust from the male anthers is easily conveyed to the female stigma, and thus passes down the style,

etc.'' This may be very pretty, but is it within the comprehension of the child? Are pollen, anther, stigma, and style found in his vocabulary? Are they words that mean anything to him? Take another example from the same book: ''After the mamma fish has laid her eggs, the papa fish swims gently over them, at the same time expelling from his body a slimy substance, and in this way the eggs are fertilized.'' These ''simple explanations'' which do not really explain, not only presuppose powers of generalizing not usually possessed by boys of five or six, but assume a knowledge of biological processes not always possessed by the parent.

On the other hand, to attribute birth to divine origin—to say that ''babies come from God''—is hardly less an eva-

sion than the old-time fairy tale of the stork and, to the extent that it is less intelligible to the child, it is the less credible.

All such roundabout explanations are but evidence of the difficulty experienced in attempting to break away from the trammeling traditions of the past. The idea that "sex things are dirty" has become so deeply rooted that even the author just quoted feels it necessary to say to his audience of little boys: "Now we do not blush or regard it impure to study the wonderful wisdom and power which God displayed in the creation of Adam and Eve," thus suggesting and arousing the very thoughts against which he professes to guard. "Blushes" and "thoughts of impurity" have no more place in moral instruction than

they have in the life of a six-year-old.

As a matter of fact it is doubtful if any good purpose can be served by beginning systematic instruction at the age of six. If the boy ask questions—as all boys and all children will as soon as they can talk—he should be answered in a plain straightforward manner. If he ask, "Where did I come from?" it should be a simple matter to reply: "You are a part of your mother and also of me." If the additional information, "Before you were born, you grew inside the body of your mother," be volunteered, it will fully satisfy his curiosity, and not improbably anticipate a question already shaping itself in the mind, in which case it is not likely that he will pursue the matter further. On the other hand, should he evince a de-

sire to know more, it will do no harm if an attempt be made to show him how parental duties and obligations are divided and shared: the mother's part in his pre-natal state, and early infancy, and the father's part in providing for his sustenance and education.

A little wholesome "preaching" of this character may, by making the subject seem dry and uninteresting, serve to curb his curiosity. It can do no harm—it may do good.

Assuming that his questions have been treated as perfectly natural, ordinary questions, and that the answers have been given without hesitation, without mystery, and without pledge of secrecy, there need be no fear that the boy will repeat what he has been told. It is original discoveries that he takes pride

in telling to others, and "secrets" that he finds difficult in keeping to himself.

In any event, all questions of childhood are reasonable; they are, moreover, the surest index to the state of the child mind—the safest guide to the parent as to when knowledge may be imparted. But they demand reasonable answers, and they demand truthful answers: to deceive a child once is to destroy his confidence.

There comes a time, however, when information must be given unasked. From six to ten the boy is fairly safe, physically and morally. His development at this age corresponds closely to that of the three months old puppy. He is no longer weak and helpless: his eyes are open; he is full of energy and un-

tiring activity, and he romps through the day without a care and with scarcely a thought of matters ulterior to his activities. But from eleven to fourteen remarkable changes take place. New powers unfold, new instincts and appetites rapidly develop, feelings of sex, hitherto dormant, assert themselves, and it is all new to the boy. This has been called the "period of ferment" and it is filled with dangers for him—dangers which menace alike his moral and his physical well-being. He is no longer the innocent sexless child; he is a boy, and like most boys of this age, he is prurient. His whole being thrills and vibrates with emotions for which he has no name, and for which he has no explanation.

But he is not yet bad; not yet depraved: on the character of the counsel

given to him at this time depends whether he shall manfully resist and conquer the promptings of his animal nature, and become the absolute master of his every impulse, or whether he shall weakly yield to temptation—surrender in advance his coming manhood—sell, as it were, his noble birthright for a mess of pottage, and become the slave of his desires, and the author of his own destruction.

But this "period of ferment" is only the precursor of another epoch in the boy's life: the early years of adolescence. This has been described as the "period of crisis." It is in these years, from fourteen to eighteen, that the boy develops, mentally, morally and physically, by leaps and bounds. It is in these years chiefly that he exhibits the

characteristics that are to make or mar his future life.

Surely this is the time to speak plainly —to tell him all about this new force, to explain to him what it means, and to show him how it may be controlled. To pass this period in silence, assuming that—like measles and whooping cough —it is something to which all boys are subject, and which most boys survive, is cowardly in the extreme if not absolutely criminal. To say, as some do, "Let him alone, if he must know, he will find out, and that all too soon," is worse than folly. Ignorance is not a safeguard, and even if it were the boy cannot be kept in ignorance. Sooner or later the information withheld by the parent will come to him, and it will come, not as a

guiding light, showing him the pitfalls and guarding his footsteps, but rather as a will-o'-the-wisp, leading him on until he is lost in the slough of despond.

CHAPTER V

THE BASIS OF CONFIDENCE

It is not the alleged difficulty of the subject that deters so many parents from speaking; it is not its "sacredness" nor its "nastiness" that ties the tongue: it is the difficulty experienced in approaching the boy.

The average father does not hesitate to dictate to him on matters of behavior and general conduct: this is a parental prerogative which he exercises freely and, as a rule, is unwilling to delegate to others; but let him think of even broaching the one subject of paramount and vital importance and immediately he becomes conscious of an

embarrassment amounting to diffidence.

The reason for this is not far to seek. Precepts of physical cleanliness and rules of deportment are based on outward, visible facts—there is no gainsaying them. It matters not, therefore, whether they be presented as reasonable conclusions or as arbitrary dicta: they are emanations of parental authority, and as such they must be accepted and observed. Moral instruction, on the other hand, deals with the boy's innermost self, with his unspoken thoughts, and with emotions and feelings of which he may be only dimly conscious. There is nothing tangible, nothing definite, nothing positive; on the contrary, since boys differ so greatly in their development, all is involved in doubt and uncertainty.

Herein lies the difficulty and the danger. The father may be deeply conscious of his responsibility, may fully recognize the boy's right to know, and may yearn for a heart to heart talk, and yet refrain from talking simply because he hesitates to assume conditions which may or may not exist. The trouble is, he does not know the boy.

But the boy is not hard to know. He is neither secretive nor reserved. By nature, he is open-hearted and frank. His instincts are essentially friendly, and, in his early years at least, he is filled to overflowing with filial affection. In a word, the conditions indispensable to free intercourse are native to him, and if there be a barrier between the father and the boy it is not the boy's fault.

Obviously, then, we must look elsewhere for the cause of embarrassment. Now, since neither the subject nor the boy is responsible for it, it would not seem unreasonable to assume that the father may be.

The great obstacle to free intercourse is lack of confidence, and this is largely due to the parental attitude. Roman law made the father all powerful. He exercised absolute control over his children. He was entitled to all they earned, and he had the power to sell them in discharge of his own debts were he so disposed. He could even, in his character of household judge, put his son to death. Modifications of these conditions have come about slowly. Cruel and inhuman punishments are no longer regarded as proper aids to discipline;

there is a growing disposition to question the soundness of the principle "spare the rod and spoil the child," and it is no longer the invariable rule that "children should be seen, not heard."

Nevertheless, even the modern father is not yet prepared to descend from the lofty pedestal on which precedent and tradition have enthroned him. "William, if I do not speak to you," said a father of the previous generation, "you may know it is because I have no fault to find," and since parental communications in his own youth invariably took the form of censure or reproof, he himself, with the best of intentions, hands them down undiminished in rigor and unsoftened in tone. He still feels that he is immeasurably above the boy, nor finds it easy to tolerate anything tend-

ing to lessen the distance. It is the assumption of this attitude of superiority and the fact that unconsciously he imposes it on the boy that makes confidence between father and son difficult.

It follows, therefore, that if anything is to be accomplished, there must first be a readjustment of existing relations. The father must descend from his high place and meet the boy just where he is. He must make it his business to get thoroughly acquainted with him, and this means more than a slight or superficial knowledge; it implies familiarity, intimacy, and fellowship. This is not something to be accomplished in an hour, a day, or a month. Nor can it be postponed until a certain period is reached. It is not safe to say: "He is only a boy; when he grows up we will be com-

panions,"—the process of getting acquainted cannot be begun too early: "procrastination is the thief of opportunity," and when the boy shall have grown up, the chances are he will select his own companions, and that the father will not be one of them.

The father who would be the boy's chosen friend and companion in later years must be his comrade and his chum in boyhood.

It may involve a little unbending to serve as high private in the ranks under a boy commander; it may cause a little stiffness in unused muscles to climb tall trees in search of nests and eggs; it may accelerate the heart beat to chase the elusive butterfly; it may require some mental effort to acquire the collector's interest in coupons and campaign

buttons; but these are some of the things that go to make up the boy's life, and the display of a sympathetic interest in them by an older person is often the open sesame to his confidence.

It may be objected that the activities mentioned are with most boys merely passing fancies—evanescent as breath on a mirror—and that a man engrossed with the cares and responsibilities of business can ill afford to lend himself to the ardent pursuit of a momentary whim; but there is nothing ephemeral about the relationship sought to be established. This is to be the groundwork, the fundamental principle or condition of intimate and unrestrained daily intercourse. This makes it all eminently worth while.

Yet to enter enthusiastically into the

boy's sports and pastimes is not sufficient. It establishes a community of interests and thus becomes a passport to confidence. But confidence carries with it the idea of assurance, implicit trust and faith, an affectionate and unquestioning belief which does not demand proofs but rests in the integrity, veracity, justice and friendship of another. And this cannot be forced. It germinates slowly, grows and develops gradually as the boy finds by experience that he can at all times rely on the father for accurate information and intelligent advice; for real help and sympathy in times of trouble and difficulty.

The basis of confidence, then, is the unquestioning belief in you, faith which impels the boy from a feeling of loyalty, readily and cheerfully to assent to the

truth of anything you may tell him; an affectionate regard which not only leads him to seek your counsel and advice, but makes him wish to regulate his life in accordance with it. This you must establish, because on no other basis can your talks with the boy be effective.

And the time has come for plain speaking.

CHAPTER VI

DANGERS

Your boy is in danger. His moral and physical welfare is imperiled. This is no time to mince words. This is no time to beat around the bush. The presence of poison in a prescription is indicated by the startling skull and cross-bones, and warnings of impending danger are written large in flaming letters of red.

You know that masturbation has blighted many promising lives. You know that it is a habit which gradually grows on the boy and that if he be not diverted from it, it will assuredly master his powers of mind and become irre-

sistible. You know that if persisted in it may sow the seeds of consumption, and that it will inevitably sap his strength and destroy his manhood. You know that it is a habit which means mental and moral degeneration, and that ultimately it leads to mental dissolution. And knowing these things you must speak, and speak with all the force and earnestness at your command. You cannot afford to hesitate for fear of suggesting things which may not have occurred to him.

It is not safe to assume that your boy is purer, better, or stronger than other boys; it is not safe to assume that your training and your teaching have placed him beyond the reach of temptation. Much as we should like to believe otherwise, the fact is that few boys attain the

age of puberty without having masturbated more or less. At first the practice may be commenced innocently enough—it is when it is persisted in that it becomes a vice; it is in this that the danger lies, and it is against this that you must safeguard your boy.

The evil effects of self-indulgence on physical health are frequently exaggerated. Many a boy has been led through the horrors of an anatomical museum by parent or guardian in the hope that the fear thus excited would prevent his forming the habit, or cause him to desist from it if it were already formed.

This is a mistake. The passion of youth is rarely, if ever, deterred by fear.

Moreover, while it is true that owing to the rapid development of new func-

tions which takes place at the age of puberty the power of resistance is lowered, and there is a greater liability to sickness and disease, the recuperative powers of youth at this age are so strong that if masturbation be checked before it becomes a fixed habit, no serious or lasting injury will result.

But the evil effects of this practice on the moral well-being of the boy cannot be exaggerated. This view is not more emphatically indorsed by moralists and preachers than by physicians.

"In the vast majority of cases, masturbation does little harm to the individual, except in regard to his morale. It unmans him, makes him untrue to himself and cowardly. The young man is over-shy, he shrinks from a steady gaze, blushes readily, and seems to be

conscious of having done something unmanly and little." [1]

"We must especially bear in mind the claims which an excessive sexual indulgence makes upon the attention, how hard it is for the sexualist to do good work and how likely he is to miss desirable intellectual and emotional interests, and also the probability that his health will be impaired and his disposition demoralized." [2]

Nor is it the moral well-being of the boy only that is jeopardized. What the boy is, the man will be. If the foundation of a vigorous constitution be not laid in youth, the man will be feeble and ineffective, unable to endure hardship or

[1] Van Buren & Keyes—Surgical Diseases of the Genito-Urinary Organs.

[2] Encyclopædia Medica Edinburgh.

to resist disease; and if strength of character and purpose are not developed and built up between the years of twelve and eighteen, there can be little hope that the man will be able successfully to withstand the temptation which shall come to him.

It is perhaps the menace to the mental health of the boy that is most to be feared, and that is hardest to guard against.

It is possible by insisting on the strict observance of health rules, by seeing that the boy has food, rest and exercise in proper amounts and at proper times to build up a constitution capable of withstanding almost any excesses. It is possible so to develop his moral nature that he shall acquire a loathing for self-pollution and bend every energy to

overcome the habit if it has been acquired. These things are comparatively easy. It is not so easy to guard him against the quacks and the charlatans. These vampires know your boy if you do not. They know that manhood is his most cherished possession, and they know that if they can insinuate the thought that he has in any way impaired it he will fall an easy victim to their wiles.

If you do not know the character of the literature they disseminate, take home the pamphlet thrust into your hands by some indiscriminate distributor, and read it carefully and thoughtfully for the purpose of determining what effect it would be likely to have on your boy should it fall into his hands. You will find that the effects of self-

pollution—"youthful indiscretion" is the euphemism frequently employed—are luridly depicted. The "miserable victim of folly" is made to feel that he is "no longer a fit object for society, but a complete imbecile"; "impotent"; "a man only in form but not in substance, without the power of exercising his functions either of mind or body."

The effect of this kind of literature can hardly be imagined.

The boy for whom it is intended is supersensitive. He has just commenced to exercise the faculty of judgment and his judgment of himself is apt to be severe. He has a morbid consciousness of sin; he sees an enormity of offense in a trivial fault, and as a result is likely to be disheartened. It matters little whether he is practicing masturbation

without any thought of wrong or any realization of the consequences involved; or whether he is striving to conquer the habit; or even whether he has gained complete control of it: the effect of such literature is equally terrifying and demoralizing. By his own act the boy has jeopardized his manhood and he feels that he is irretrievably lost. "Impotent," "unfit for society," "the semblance of a man" ring constantly in his ears and sound the knell of hope and ambition.

Plunged thus into the very depths of abject despair, brooding by day and night on his condition, feeling that he is marked and recognized wherever he goes, is it any wonder if ultimately he fulfills the direful prognosis of the quack and becomes "a complete imbecile!"

It is only by forestalling the quacks that you can save your boy. It is only by putting him in possession of the truth that you can guard him against perversions and distortions.

And this you must do.

CHAPTER VII

SAFEGUARDS

We have seen that true knowledge is the best safeguard the boy can have, and that it is at the age of puberty that he stands most in need of this defense and shield. Do you know whether your boy has reached this critical period; and, if so, just when he entered it? Mothers are fully informed on this point in so far as it relates to girls, but the ignorance of many fathers is astonishing and deplorable; astonishing because the knowledge is easily gained—deplorable because ignorance is responsible for mistakes and misunderstandings which often work irretrievable damage.

Pubescent means covered with short soft hair or down, and the appearance of hair on the face, under the armpits and on the lower part of the abdomen is at once an unmistakable and a very apparent sign that the boy has arrived at the age of puberty. An earlier sign, and one quite as readily observable, is the breaking or changing of the voice.

You know that when he has arrived at this age he is subject to temptation, and you are justified in assuming that if he has not yielded before he may yield now. "To ignore or deny the wide prevalence of the evil, in the way often done, is sometimes honest ignorance, but is also often affectation and even a form of hypocrisy and cant.[1] And the fact

[1] G. Stanley Hall—Adolescence.

that while the danger is great, the disease is not difficult to diagnose, nor the remedy hard to apply, renders parental negligence all the more culpable.

The symptoms, as we have seen, are well known to the quacks; but they are equally well known and have been clearly defined by the highest medical authorities.

"The gross evidence of such injury would be sought for in the skin and in muscle and nerve—pallor, flushings, and pimples, tremor and restlessness, going on to loss of sleep, with perhaps the addition of perverted appetite for food and drink." [2]

"The immediate effects of self-indulgence in young children number among them circulatory disturbances of both

[2] Encyclopædia Medica Edinburgh.

motor and sensory nature, irritability, insubordination, and outbursts of inexplicable anger. Besides these manifestations there are usually a decided bashfulness and reserve in society, averted gaze, and lack of manly bearing. There is, too, a tendency to avoid company or the joining in youthful sports, but rather to retire alone or with a single companion, upon whom the suspicion of being an accomplice should rest. In study hours there is a dullness, drowsiness, preoccupation, and lack of application with often pronounced weakness of memory and absent-mindedness."[3]

"Children given over to onanism may have some general symptoms such as great thirst, pallor of the face, emacia-

[3] CHAS. W. ALLEN—Twentieth Century Practice of Medicine.

tion, languor, debility, insomnia, palpitation, breathlessness, a dry cough, vertigo, gastralgia, dark and gloomy thoughts, or neurasthenia. Sometimes we see an absolute inertia, and semi-idiocy, with loss of memory, hallucinations of sight and hearing and dilations of the pupils, all phenomena dependent upon an excessive loss of nervous force."[4]

"They (boys) have a sheepish, hang-dog expression; their eyes are deep set, they incline to melancholy broodings, to sitting by themselves and reading over a fire rather than to joining their companions at play. They become absent-minded and their memory seems defective. The hand is apt to be cold and moist in the palm; the skin is often pal-

[4] Jules Comby, Paris.

lid; the innocent frankness of youth is absent."[5]

These are the carefully thought-out statements of reputable physicians. The books from which they are culled are usually to be found in public libraries and they are therefore accessible to you. They furnish criteria by which you may determine accurately the condition of your boy, and they furnish abundant texts—if such are needed—for the talks which you should have with him.

But this is not all. The same authorities not only indicate the symptoms by which the habit may be recognized, but also point out how it may be prevented, prescribe the cure, and carefully explain the principles which dictate the treatment recommended.

[5] VAN BUREN & KEYES—Surgical Diseases of the Genito-Urinary Organs.

"The most satisfactory results are obtained by treating the physical and general condition of the patient. Benefit is likely to result if one can induce the patient to desist from masturbation, and can impress on him the fact that his trouble is curable and of no grave significance. The patient should lead an active life, taking a considerable amount of outdoor bodily exercise, so that at the close of the day he experiences a well-marked sensation of muscular fatigue. The patient should be instructed to arise immediately on awakening in the morning, to empty his bladder, and to take a cold bath. His diet should not be restricted in amount but all indigestible and stimulating articles of food must be avoided. The patient should be instructed not to take a large amount of

fluid at night. Constipation, if present must be corrected. Attention should be directed to the patient's mental state. His mind should be fully employed with some healthful occupation, he should be encouraged to desist from all sexual thoughts."[6]

"It is not wise to try to terrify him out of his habit by brilliant and exaggerated statements of the possible misery he may bring upon himself if he does not stop. This is appealing to a base motive, fear of an indefinite evil in the future, and it is often inadequate, for a healthy boy cannot realize what it means to be sick, and consequently is not afraid of it. The method of treatment that is most effective and at the same time the one that requires the most force to carry

[6] Encyclopædia Medica Edinburgh.

out, is to elevate the boy out of his bad habit, to shame him, to make a man out of him, to reason with him and talk to him, openly and honestly, without reserve or mysticism; to sympathize with him, not wound him; to study him and treat him morally."[7]

"Straightforward sympathetic common sense is what is required. By impressive reasoning the boy's mind can usually be led into proper channels. Since it has been shown that mental equilibrium is interfered with more by derangement of the procreative powers than by that of any other function, all precautions should be taken to prevent morbid brooding over real or fancied seminal losses."[8]

[7] VAN BUREN & KEYES—Surgical Diseases of the Genito-Urinary Organs.

[8] CHAS. W. ALLEN—Twentieth Century Practice of Medicine.

All this is in pleasing contrast with the terrifying statements of the quacks —seminal losses or "nocturnal emissions" are their main stock in trade—the bug-a-boo with which they seek to affright and appall. And too often they succeed, and the pity is that they are most successful with boys who really desire to do right. Such boys when shown that self-pollution is unmanly, degrading, and debasing, require little urging to abandon the habit, but when they feel that however much they may strive against it, however much they may bring it under control in their wakeful moments, they are powerless against it in sleep, they lose heart and hope and are filled with consternation and dismay.

This may be the case with your boy.

But you can and you must save him.

The medical authorities cited will tell you that these emissions are "physiological events"; that "in men who practice continence, the nocturnal escape of seminal fluid at variable intervals of time is a perfectly normal occurrence" and that instead of being an evidence of depravity it is rather a proof of chastity. Self-interest would prompt them to side with the quack and the charlatan—to magnify the danger and disease, to make difficult and obscure the treatment, that the cure might be the more glorious and, incidentally, not less profitable to them. But with noble unselfishness, actuated solely by a regard for others, the reputable medical men of today—the family doctors—discuss this subject in terms so simple that he who runs may read; and every word rings

true with sincerity and earnestness.

Your interest is greater than theirs. It is your boy—not "a patient"—that is in danger. Are you going to let him fight his battle alone and in fear; or, are you going to give him the helping hand of sympathy?

The sympathy and encouragement you extend at this time will prove his greatest safeguard, and will be gratefully and appreciatively remembered.

CHAPTER VIII

STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT

The boy is beginning to exercise a newly developed faculty—the faculty of judgment. The unquestioning acceptance of statement as fact which characterized the years of childhood has disappeared, and in its place has come a disposition to compare statement with fact, to discriminate and to distinguish. It is here that he most needs correct standards. Hitherto he has depended upon you for everything. He has been subject to your guidance and control. You have regulated every detail of his life—his eating, his sleeping, his recreation, and his work. All that he has done has been

done under your direction and his attitude has been one of obedience and unreasoning compliance.

But now—whether you will or no—whether he is conscious of it or not—he is disposed to strike out for himself, to blaze a new and independent trail, to take his life into his own hands, and become the architect of his own career.

He needs a plan of life. He needs a blue print with the building line so clearly delineated that in his structure there may be harmonious relation between the parts, that each may have its equal or proper share; he needs a square that his building may be true and just and fair and honest; he needs a level that there may be no inequalities, that all may be characterized by poise and balance; he needs a plumb that he may preserve

an exact perpendicular—a perfect uprightness; and he needs a rule that he may accurately determine the extent, the value, and the quality of his work. These are the standards of judgment which your boy must have.

Have you provided them?

"Parents usually educate their children merely in such a manner that however bad the world may be, they may adapt themselves to its present conditions. But they ought to give them an education so much better than this, that a better condition of things may be brought about in the future."[1]

What is the object of the training you are giving to your boy? Is it your aim to enable him merely "to take care of himself," or does your scheme of edu-

[1] Kant.

cation take a broader and more unselfish view and comprehend the care of others, also?

What do you think of a man who glories in the fact that by establishing in his youth relations of a certain character with a "wholesome parlor maid" he was "saved" from temptation, and smugly boasts that, as a result, he came to his wife "clean at any rate, if not absolutely pure?" Yet the case is not uncommon. Men have been known to go still further and give expression to the hope that their boys might be equally "fortunate." These are the men who were taught only how "to take care of themselves."

You have other ideas for your boy. Just now your concern is about himself. You are anxious that no act of

his shall cause him to blush or be ashamed; that nothing that is low or mean shall enter into his thoughts or find expression in his words. You entertain high hopes for him, but you have no desire to see him an angel or a saint; you wish, rather, that he may develop into a strong, virile man—a noble man in the truest sense, brave, resolute and chivalrous. Your aim for him is not the negative goodness of the cloistered monk, but fullness and richness of life. And it is because you realize that the cleaner the life of the boy, the greater the mental and moral enrichment of the man, that you are so solicitous of the present.

"A healthy boy of eight years, who, like most boys, comes out occasionally with a remark that opens a little window

into an unsuspected corner of his mind, said to his father, 'Tell me something to go by.' Questioning disclosed that what he wanted was a motto. Two of his boy friends had mottoes and were proud of them. It seemed that these mottoes were consulted often, and that a good many important points were settled accordingly. Our boy felt he was handicapped, and was a little ashamed. But behind that shame the father detected something more subtle—a groping sense of ideals. And to the task of choosing a motto that the boy would understand, and that would, as it were, grow up with him, he gave earnest thinking. His choice was this: 'Know the truth and speak the truth.'

"That motto, he decided, had integrity

and was unassailable. He repeated it to the boy, explaining in simple words that by knowing the truth was meant looking squarely at whatever you came upon, and not allowing what you wanted to think, or what someone else wanted you to think, make you think what was right was wrong, or vice versa. In a way this was doctrine of very modern fashion, and proffering it to the boy was much like placing in his hands a two-edged sword with which he probably would cut himself badly before he learned how to use the weapon with discretion as well as valor. But the father reasoned that the rashness that brought about these wounds would soon correct itself, and that the habit which practice would breed in the boy would make him

resistless in attacking whatever was unworthy in himself.'' [2]

Have you given your boy ''something to go by?''

[2] Churchill Williams in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, November, 1911.

CHAPTER IX

HABITS

Good conduct is largely a matter of habit. The potent factor is the unselfish will to do right—a determination which gains its impulse neither from fear of punishment nor from hope of reward. This desire to do right simply because it is right involves the idea of duty and obligation, and seeks the well-being of the many rather than the happiness and advancement of the individual. To be effective, however, it must become active and imperative. It is not enough to "know the truth" or to know the right: the corollary should be "speaking the truth" and doing the

right. Virtue is the *habit* of doing right and someone has said that, reduced to its simplest terms, the process of training children is the process of forming habits.

The dominating power of a bad habit is very generally recognized, but that a good habit is not less dominant is sometimes overlooked. A boy acquires the habit of stooping over his work and goes through life round-shouldered, but a German shoemaker who has spent the early years of his manhood in the army may sit all day bent over the last and still retain erect carriage and military bearing. And what is true of habits of body is equally true of habits of thought and of conduct.

The habits which your boy forms before he is twenty-one will shape and

determine his life from that time on.

Since the cultivation of correct habits cannot be commenced too early, it follows that whatever you may have already accomplished is so much clear gain, and that if you have as yet done nothing you must begin now.

The habit of obedience to authority must become instinctive. This, as we have seen, is the cardinal lesson of childhood. Conscience in later years will take the place of authority, and if the boy has not acquired the habit of yielding unquestioning obedience to you, he can hardly be expected to have a natural inward impulse to obey the dictates of "the still small voice."

The habit of cleanliness—one of the first to be impressed on the child—must be cultivated. "Wash and be clean"

can hardly be reiterated too often, or too emphatically enforced. The boy must be made to feel that to be really clean he must be clean in every part, and internally as well as externally. The medical authorities quoted in a previous chapter indicate the importance of habits of internal cleanliness as a preventive of immoral acts and in the treatment of disorders resulting from immoral practice.

For similar reasons, early rising should be made habitual. Your boy will be saved from many temptations if he form the habit of getting out of bed immediately he awakes. Moreover, since this habit is closely associated with the habits of punctuality and industry, by thus promptly getting up he will gain the impetus for his day's work.

The habit of self-reliance must be cultivated early. The boy may be fortunate enough to receive help from time to time, but in the great crises of life he will have to depend on himself. You are developing him on an efficiency basis, but ability to do things is not all-sufficient: there must be that consciousness of power which characterizes the man who has learned that he can safely depend upon himself. The diffident "I wish" will inevitably go to the wall, but the masterful "I can" will surmount every difficulty.

The habit of self-control is conditioned to a great extent on the habit of self-reliance. Indeed, the former is impossible until the latter has been developed. The boy has his battles to fight and his greatest enemy, often, is himself.

You may admonish, exhort, counsel, or encourage, but the fighting must be done by him, and to be successful he must acquire the habit of controlling himself, his impulses, his actions, and his appetites.

That the habit of self-control may influence not only his words but his actions and his thoughts, it is imperative that the habit of pure thinking be formed. This is not easy, especially at a time when new feelings and new emotions are running riot in his being and demanding mental recognition. Yet when once the habit of pure thinking is established evil thoughts will hardly find lodgment, and it is by no means impossible so to fill the boy's mind with thoughts of "the true, the beautiful, and the good" that other thoughts shall be positively distasteful and offensive.

Your boy's attitude toward women should be that of chivalrous protection. But if he is to maintain the best traditions of knighthood and, as he grows up, become "generous, just and gentle; a redresser of the wrongs of widows and orphans, and a protector of ladies" he must, in turn, be page and squire in boyhood. He must learn the countless little courtesies demanded by good-breeding, and acquire the habit of doing them gracefully and cheerfully, even though at times it involve self-sacrifice. He must do more than this. He must learn that true courtesy means more than mere politeness—it implies reverence and respect, and to render these to all women, regardless of station or condition, must become second nature to him.

These are some of the habits you must

help your boy to acquire. They are not the only ones. Habits are "bundles of memories which enable us to do again what we have done before," and the things you wish your boy to do again and again until the doing becomes almost automatic, are the things you must make habitual.

But there are bad habits as well as good. "Virtue is the habit of doing right"; vice, the habit of doing wrong. And while it is important in the highest degree to cultivate good habits, it is no less important to overcome bad habits. Prof. Bain says: "The peculiarity of the moral habits, contradistinguishing them from the intellectual acquisitions, is the presence of two hostile powers, one to be gradually raised into the ascendent over the other. It is necessary, above

all things, in such a situation, never to lose a battle. Every gain on the wrong side undoes the effect of many conquests on the right. The essential precaution, therefore, is so to regulate the two opposing powers that the one may have a series of uninterrupted successes, until repetition has fortified it to such a degree as to enable it to cope with the opposition under any circumstances."

To recapitulate: the boy must be helped to acquire good habits, and encouraged to overcome bad habits, until the performance of good and the avoidance of evil become not only habitual but volitional.

CHAPTER X

ACTIVITIES

The relation which the daily activities of the boy bear to his mental and spiritual being is not always recognized.

Yet the things which he does with his hands, and the way in which he does them, are potent influences in determining his attitude towards life.

The desire "to do things" is inherent in all children. It may crop out in the making of mud pies; it may find expression in the construction of moated castles on the sands, or in the erection of mansions from building blocks of stone and wood. It may disclose itself in crude drawings, in boat-building, in

kite making, in the hewing of trees, or in the making of gardens. But whatever form it takes it is there. No conception is too grand—no undertaking, too great. The boy delights in doing things, and nothing is too difficult to attempt.

But his energy and ambition are not unlikely to run away with him. When the zest of doing takes hold of him he is apt to overdo. Feeling neither fatigue nor weariness, he may frequently overrate his newly acquired but still undeveloped strength, with the result that a reaction sets in. Periods of unusual activity and persevering industry are followed by periods of inertia and listlessness. He is spasmodic in his work rather than consistent and steady. "He works by spells" has been your obser-

vation, and the fact has occasioned you not a little concern. But there is nothing radically wrong. He has simply overtaxed himself. He has become tired. He is suffering from the rebound and is asking himself "What's the use?"—a question which you, yourself, have asked more than once, and left unanswered.

And right here is your opportunity—your chance to shape and direct his career.

By many it is urged that what the boy needs is a definite aim and ambition and the reasons adduced in support of this view are cogent and seem conclusive. But however good the theory may be it does not work out in practice. There are boys who at ten, twelve, or fourteen acquire "a definite aim, and ambition"

and order life accordingly, but they are exceptions. At this age the normal boy is anything but steadfast in his objects and intentions. His aspirations are influenced to a great extent by his reading and by his environment. The exploits of Paul Jones, of Farragut, of Schley, or of Dewey may awaken a love of the sea, and instantly the navy becomes his objective. The military achievements of Grant, Sheridan, Stonewall Jackson, or Lee, coupled with the fascinations of a uniform, may fill him with an apparently unquenchable desire to be a soldier.

Most boys at one time or another have had such aspirations. With others the idea of being postman, chauffeur, fireman, or policeman has spelled happiness and success. For others the profession of law or medicine has seemed to offer

the greatest inducements. And not a few have elected to be farmers, artisans, or storekeepers.

The inclinations and ambitions of boys are subject to change from year to year, and this adds not a little to the unrest and ferment which characterizes the period of adolescence. With each change of objective necessitating a fresh start, a beginning all over again, there comes a consciousness of wasted effort and futile endeavor and, as a result, the boy becomes disheartened and indifferent.

But you can help him. If you cannot compel or even induce him to aim at life with a rifle, you can at least see to it that every discharge of his shot gun shall yield results.

Suppose the boy does vacillate in his

choice of a vocation—suppose he decides to be this to-day; that, to-morrow; and something quite different the day after—these shiftings are but indications of changing ideals, and not infrequently they are expressions of mental development. They are natural to the boy and you can utilize them to his benefit and make them a source of power and strength instead of weakness.

Does he desire to be a soldier? Make him a good soldier. Let him learn obedience and discipline. Impress upon him the importance of a soldierly bearing. Instill lessons of intrepidity, courage and fortitude. His enthusiasm will make him eager for counsel, quick to accept advice, ready to follow out suggestions. The Boy Scout movement exemplifies the possibilities of this train-

ing. If the fever exhaust itself, and it doubtless will, he will come out of it with an erect, military carriage, and with some ability to control not only others but himself.

If his inclinations are toward the navy, let him see how small a thing it is to be rated simply A. B. Let him understand that plain, ordinary, every-day arithmetical processes are employed in the science of navigation, that a sailor must know geography, and that if he aims to pace the quarter-deck, he must demonstrate in examinations that he is qualified not only to command a vessel and its complement of men, but tactfully and diplomatically to represent his nation in any and every emergency. And whether he go to Annapolis, whether he sign as an enlisted man, or whether he

entirely abandon the idea, under the stimulus of his ambition he will, at least, add to his store of knowledge, and learn another lesson of self-control.

But in your boy's make-up there may be nothing heroic. He may see you—his father—busied in the arts of peace. He may see you painting a door, papering a room, or making a garden, and he may decide that as his father is, so he will be. If you have established the right relations, this will be his natural impulse. He bears your name, you are his ideal, and he desires to follow in your footsteps. This, at any rate, is his present ambition, though circumstances may modify it considerably or change it entirely.

Meantime, there are moral lessons involved in brushing in the paint, in

matching designs in wall paper, and in a weedless garden laid out in straight lines. Do not let your boy get the impression that by reason of your years and your experience you are the only one qualified to do this work. You learned, and learned by experience: tell him he can do the same. He may ultimately decide to be a lawyer or a doctor; but in a well-papered wall, free from blisters and irregularities, and in a well-laid-out garden he will find, not cause for discontent and discouragement, but inspiration to a higher plane of work. He will be a better lawyer, or a more efficient doctor from having learned in youth that "a thing worth doing, is worth doing well."

Moreover, success in manual effort encourages a belief in success in mental

control, and both involve a belief in one's self, and when you have developed this in your boy you have developed self-reliance without which he can neither hope nor expect to gain the mastery of himself.

CHAPTER XI

DAY-DREAMS

Do you notice in your boy a tendency to "dream" over his work? Have you ever taken the trouble to inquire into the nature of his dreams? Are they simply idle wishes—the wishes that would put beggars on horse-back and make princes of paupers? Or, are they visions of the possibilities the future holds for him?

There is a vast difference between the dreams of great ambition and of attainment and the fruitless imaginings that lead only to self-delusion.

The progress of all ages, in art, in science, in literature, and in industry, is marked by the achievement of dreamers.

Wireless telegraphy, the telephone, the phonograph, the automobile, and the aeroplane are but a few instances of the dreams of ages realized in the nineteenth century. The Great Northern System, which has opened up a vast territory and developed untold wealth, was the dream of James J. Hill, and it is said that he devoted two whole years to giving order and coherence to his dream before even a spadeful of earth was turned.

If your boy snatches from his work a minute now and a minute then in which to project himself into the future and dream dreams of high endeavor, it is well, "and it doth not yet appear what he shall be."

There is, however, no more baneful habit than that of day-dreaming—giving

free rein to vagrant wishes. Nor is there a habit more easily acquired, nor more difficult to break. In his day-dreams the boy sees himself a multi-millionaire—he does not stop short of this because, as many a one has been heard to say: "While we are wishing we might as well wish for a lot." Or, perhaps it is not great wealth with all its possibilities that attracts him; he may prefer to imagine himself the leading tenor of his day, more famous than any who have preceded him; or, it may be that his bent is to athletics and he conceives himself excelling all others in high jumps, and making unheard-of records in Marathons. Or, since it is so easy to become great in day-dreams, he may elect to excel in many lines and conceive himself a modern Admiral

Crichton. One thing is certain, whatever he may choose, he recognizes no period of hard work, thrift, economy, wise investment, close study, or rigorous training between him and the realization of his desires. He wishes and the thing is done!

And then the awakening—bringing with it disillusion, discontent, and disappointment!

Suddenly he discovers that he is not wealthy, that he is not famous, and that the price of success is untiring industry and unwavering perseverance, and because the reality is so different from the dream he becomes discouraged and apathetic. Earnest effort is irksome, work of any kind is distasteful; the mind which in dreams has moved with the utmost rapidity, conjuring up one fantas-

tic possibility after another, now refuses to get down to steady work. The habit of wandering having been acquired, concentrated attention on a given subject is impossible.

But the mischief does not end here. When once the mind is freed of all restraint, other ideas than those of self-aggrandizement may, and frequently do, take possession. Daydreams have left the boy with a distaste for serious study, and for the moment he is without occupation and without definite purpose. "Men are usually tempted by the devil," says a Spanish proverb, "but the idle man positively tempts the devil," and what is true of the adult is not less true of the unformed boy. Someone has said: "Many a boy murders his own soul in the effort to 'kill time.'" His

body is at rest and for this reason his brain is all the more active. A remark recalled, the recollection of a suggestive picture, some memory of a story heard or read—anyone of these may be the spark to kindle a train of thought that shall become a consuming flame. One thing is certain: the boy who has thus allowed his imagination to become polluted by impure thoughts falls an easy victim to the temptation to bodily pollution to which such thoughts inevitably tend.

What, then, is your duty toward the daydreamer? How best may the helping hand be extended?

To what extent have you sought to share your boy's thoughts? "Don't dream! Get to work," you have said many a time—what do you know about

his dreams? The powers of imagination are his, and he will use them. Let him use them; but take care that you give them right direction. If you would have his dreams crystallize into deeds, the responsibility is yours to see that his dreams are of the kind you wish realized. It may not have occurred to you that you can do much to prevent the formation of the habit of idle dreaming by leaving the boy little or no time in which to indulge in it. This is accomplished by the simple expedient of planning out his day's work in advance—by having a set time for everything and insisting on punctuality. "This habit," says a well-known writer, "of keeping the mind employed, will soon destroy the common habit of reverie; the soul will be too busy for reverie, and then if she

gains nothing by change of occupation, by way of acquisition, she gains the satisfaction that she is not wandering off on forbidden ground."

CHAPTER XII

COMPANIONSHIPS

By nature man is gregarious. There are hermits and recluses. They are usually misers or misanthropes. They are never normal. If man travels or lives alone, it is from sheer necessity; not from choice. His instinct is to flock with his kind; to form groups, companies, clans, tribes, nations.

The countless organizations that spring up in suburban and rural communities are but expressions of this gregarious impulse.

A development is started in the wilderness—streets are laid out, lots staked off, men come, one by one, from all quar-

ters. To the extent that home-making is the object of each, there may be said to be a common interest.

But home is essentially personal. It is the dwelling place of the individual—the abode of the family of one. Yet no sooner do three or four homes take shape and find tenants than we have society.

Clubs, associations, and fraternities are formed to take the individual out of the privacy of the home—the object of his migration—and merge him in a more or less public body. This is the history of man in all ages. There is an ever-present desire to get together, and the flimsiest excuse is usually an all-sufficient reason for yielding to this inclination.

Man demands company and fellow-

ship. It is not good, nor is it natural for him to be alone. He craves intimate, friendly association with his kind, and solitary confinement as a penalty has for him greater horrors than physical pain.

What the man is, the boy was. Man is the sum of the accumulations of the boy. Or, in other words, the boy is simply an earlier edition of the man—an edition in which mistakes may be corrected, or errors perpetuated.

The man may sometimes be self-centered and self-sufficient; the boy is rarely so. The boy without associates is incomplete—abnormal. It is as natural for him to have companions as it is for him to breathe, eat, sleep, run, or jump. It is a necessary part of his life. The desires that actuate man in forming co-

teries and cliques are not less impelling forces with the boy with whom they take their rise. The man's club finds its counterpart in the boy's "gang."

To run with the gang is the ambition of most boys, especially young boys. The gang, as a general thing, has no preamble, no written constitution, and no by-laws. The leader usually is the strongest or the boldest member, and he is a law unto himself. By reason of his strength, he enforces his dictates and the gang follows cheerfully, willingly, and enthusiastically where he leads.

But a gang is not necessarily bad. We have seen, in an earlier chapter, that so-called bad boys are those whose training has perverted tendencies otherwise good. It is so, many times, with the gang. Loyalty, obedience, and honor

there must be in all gangs, and these surely are admirable qualities—beautiful and ennobling. They are the qualities we look for in our army and navy. They are at the basis of the loftiest patriotism, and they are the indispensable condition to all good service.

Enmity may exist between different gangs; but there is also much friendly rivalry. There is a spirit of emulation which is easily capable of being turned to good account.

Outside agencies, societies and associations are accomplishing much good for the boy of the present generation by taking the gang as organized and giving it proper direction. But this work could be done more efficiently by the home and the father.

Because he "trails with the gang"

your boy is not necessarily tough. But you should know something about the gang and the members that compose it. Forbush quotes the story of the wife of Jacob Riis who, finding that the "gang" spirit had taken hold of her boy, *joined the gang.* "She 'gave in wood' to the election of bonfires, and pulled the safety-valve upon all other plots by entering into the true spirit of them—which was adventure rather than mischief—and so keeping them within safe lines. She was elected an honorary member, and became the counselor of the gang in all their little scrapes." There is a suggestion in this for you.

You welcome at your house the monthly whist which furnishes relaxation for your own spare moments. Do you welcome as cordially the gang to

which your boy looks for diversion? The one has just as much a place in the home as the other. To quote Forbush again: "The very apparent self-sufficiency of the boy at this period causes the parent to discontinue many means of amusement and tokens of affection which were retained until now. The twelve-month infant is submerged in toys, but the twelve-year-old boy has nothing at all at home to play with. The infant is caressed until he is pulplike and breathless, but the lad who is hungry for love and understanding is held at arm's length."

Companions are as necessary to the happiness of the boy as are toys to the happiness of the child, but with companions as with toys, some are helpful and good while others are harmful and dan-

gerous. You would not dream of letting the three-year-old play with matches and gunpowder, with edge tools, or with loaded firearms, yet to allow a twelve-year-old to associate with unfit companions may bring about a catastrophe infinitely more far-reaching in its effects.

But in order to judge and to estimate your boy's friends, you must know them. You must know them, not merely by sight, not merely by name, not as a body only, but as individuals. It is hardly less important for you to establish friendly, intimate relations with your boy's chums than it is with the boy himself. And the same means are available. If you make the experiment, the probability is that when the boys get together more than one will voice the sentiment: "Your Pop's all right!" And

this will certainly not lessen your influence with your own boy.

Moreover, if you give cordial welcome to your boy's friends, you will have little occasion to worry about the undesirables. Boys have a sense of the eternal fitness of things with which often they are not credited, and your boy will be the first to perceive which, if any, of his comrades, do not fit in with the home environment. He will not be inclined to press an invitation on those whose presence is an offense to mother, sisters, or father, nor will he be apt to seek their companionship outside of the home circle.

There is usually nothing haphazard in the boy's choice of friends. He seeks those who possess qualities he himself lacks, and when he discovers that these

qualities are not admirable, his interest ceases.

Home is the great crucible for friendships, and those which do not stand the test will, in the end, have little attraction for the boy.

Someone has said that the companionships formed by the boy may bless or blast his career, and it is this that makes them a matter of utmost concern.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ABSENT BOY

The boy is away at school. For the time being he is removed from your immediate control. His training and guidance, hitherto your duty and peculiar prerogative, must now be taken up and carried on by others. Up to this point his education has been a source of pleasure. Some anxiety there has been, of course; some disappointments, too, which possibly brought discouragement in their train. There were times when, for all that appeared on the surface, the care and training you have given might almost as well have been withheld. Mentally and physically he grew rapidly;

morally and ethically the changes were so gradual as to be almost imperceptible.

But a glorious optimism characterizes the attitude of the father toward the son. If this year the boy has not done so well, next year he will surely do better; it is easy to believe that he was handicapped, to find some all-sufficient excuse for failure. There are always mitigating circumstances, and he is rarely so bad but that he might be worse. "Hope springs eternal" in the parent's breast. And so, though the progress has been slow, though there have been setbacks and relapses necessitating new beginnings and fresh starts, you have taken not a little pleasure in the training. The growth, though so gradual as to be hardly discernible, has been there, and from time

to time there have been disclosures on the part of the boy which have filled you with ineffable gladness and strengthened and confirmed your faith in him.

And now that he is away your responsibility is not ended. Share it you must, perforce; but it is far from your desire to shift it entirely.

By some it is held that the most suitable time for "plain speaking," either by word of mouth or by letter, is when the boy first goes away to school. And if it so happen that there have been no heart to heart talks, no previous instruction, something should certainly be attempted at this time. It will not be easy—the conditions necessary to make such a talk or such a letter either easy or effective are lacking—but however difficult it is you must undertake it.

You cannot safely assume that another will take up and satisfactorily perform a duty essentially your own, and you dare not let the boy go out from home without chart to warn him of impending danger and without compass by which to shape his course. There are breakers ahead, currents which may carry him out of his bearings and rocks on which he may be dashed to pieces. If he suffer shipwreck and become a hopeless derelict, you will always have a feeling that primarily you were responsible. But if he shall come safely into the haven of decent manhood, he will ever gratefully recall your counsel, given at a critical moment.

But whether you are in the position of being at length compelled suddenly to attempt something which you have weakly

postponed or, whether you have established relations which make talking easy and writing unnecessary, the boy's going away is a serious matter. It means that you are taking final leave of the boy you have known. It is not a case of "till we meet" but of "good-by"—absolute and irrevocable. When the boy returns you may expect to renew an old friendship; you will find that you have to form a new acquaintance. A change has taken place. There is a demand—clear and unmistakable, though unexpressed—for a readjustment of relations which must be recognized. The boy has traveled. His environment has been enlarged. He has seen a new world and, in so far as he has held his own with others, he has conquered it. Liberty Bell has sounded in his ears, and he is inclined to assert

his independence. This may disclose itself in a lack of respect hitherto unnoticed; in a tendency to resent anything in the nature of a caress; or in an air of superiority assumed towards sisters and younger brothers. It is a subtile change. Woman's intuition is quick to perceive it, and not improbably his mother will feel it keenly while yet you are barely conscious of it. In any case, it is there. Do what you will you cannot prevent its taking place.

There is, however, no reason why you should not anticipate it—no reason why—knowing that it must come—you should not utilize it to bring you into closer relations with the boy. Though he go away, it is possible for you to keep closely in touch with him. The mail service is good—why not use it? If the

principals of correspondence schools can keep accurate record of the expanding intelligence of distant pupils whom they have never met, it should not be difficult for you to watch the development of an absent boy whom you know well and with whose antecedents you are intimately acquainted. If your letters have the right tone, they will strike a responsive chord. It is, at any rate, well worth trying.

In the home circle, child and adult are sharply divided. The line of demarcation extends not only to interests and activities but to conversation. Children are not allowed to take part in the councils of their elders because they "do not understand"; their opinions are not entitled to respect because "they do not understand." All of this may be true.

But when the boy gets away he finds that he is on a par with other boys. He not only understands what they understand but feels that he himself is understood. He feels that at last he is somebody, and that his own personal opinion counts. He is no longer passive but active, and his daily progress in studies and sports seems to justify the belief that he is able to do and to think for himself—a belief which he is very ready to entertain.

This suggests the syllabus of your "correspondence course." You must scan his letters as though they were examination papers; not for the purpose of detecting errors, but to note progress and development, and this you must be prompt to recognize and praise. Do not adopt the heavy father pose, and load your letters with weighty admonitions:

what the boy needs is friendly interest which concerns itself with his thoughts, his studies, and his daily doings. "I will even lay aside my age," wrote Lord Chesterfield to his son, "remember yours, and speak to you as one man of pleasure would to another." This must be your attitude. Forget that he is your son, who up till now has been subject to your authority and has bowed to your will, and learn to regard him as a friend. Treat him as an equal and you will be surprised to find how heartily he will respond. If he display a little bumptiousness, do not fall into the error of saying, as so many do: "What he needs is a good thrashing." If it were in your power to put the thought into effect, it would be fatal to any hope you might entertain of influencing him.

It would be far better at this time to treat him as though he were superior: he will find his place in due course, and his respect and affection for you will be deepened by the discovery of the fact that instead of seeking to put him there, you have allowed him to find it for himself. Among those of his own age, the boy is an equal, and yet you will find him disposed to choose companions older than himself. If he have an early love affair the girl will surely be several years his senior and, in all probability, seriously inclined. Life is very real to him and, at this stage, anything approaching frivolity jars and repels.

But notwithstanding all his self-assertion, deep down in his inner consciousness he is very humble. Conscious of his ability to walk, he yet fears to walk

alone. He realizes the need of someone on whose judgment he can rely, and he is strongly attracted to one whose greater knowledge of life and more mature years inspire confidence. His need is really for a "big brother" rather than a heavy father, and if in your "correspondence course" you have led him to regard you in this light, you have nothing but pleasure to anticipate in his homecoming.

CHAPTER XIV

COMPENSATIONS

A well-known physician once said: "The tendency of disease is to get better in spite of all we doctors can do." Nevertheless we vaccinate against smallpox, inoculate against typhoid, quarantine against yellow fever, and resort to all the preventive measures known to modern sanitation. We are not taking any chances.

There is abundant evidence that the tendency of boys is to grow into decent manhood in spite of early habits, environment, or lack of training. Nevertheless from year to year the education and training of youth engrosses an ever-in-

creasing share of public consideration. Again, we are not taking any chances.

The boy whose life is outlined in the opening chapter is exceptional. The murderer awaiting the chair is exceptional. The incorrigible criminal committed for life is exceptional. Where one becomes a malefactor and an outlaw scores become law-abiding citizens.

Good citizens far outnumber the bad, but you are not justified in assuming that your boy will be among the good. Good and bad had an even chance at the start. Nor are you justified in believing that, because scores of boys pass through the temptations of youth without apparent harm, your boy will come through scathless: he may be the one to make havoc of his life by self-abuse and you are not taking any chances.

"Everything," says Prof. Henry Davis of Yale, "points to the probability that *the* problem of the twentieth century will be the moral training of the young," and if you are seeking to educate your boy in matters of vital importance to him, and in matters that, between the years of twelve and eighteen, will most strongly influence his life you are but recognizing the trend of public thought, you are but marching in the van of progress, you are but fulfilling your sacred duty as a father.

After all, the training is not hard. "Wash and be clean" is the basis of the most modern instruction, as it was the basis of the old Levitical law, and clean thinking is closely allied to clean living. And then what? An amount of outdoor

exercise sufficient to induce a feeling of muscular fatigue at the close of the day; plain food, unrestricted in amount, but thoroughly digestible, with the minimum of irritating and stimulating condiments; a hard bed, light covering, and pure fresh air in abundance day and night. This, in brief, is the physical regimen you must prescribe.

For the rest? You must know your boy. You must know him intimately—you must be his other self, the repository of his innermost thoughts, his confidant, his counselor, and his friend. You must talk to him fearlessly and frankly. You must sympathize with him in his difficulties, and when he fails, as fail he will, encourage him to fresh effort. You must not fear to tell him that the temptations which now are his

were once yours. An ideal which seems impossible of realization is discouraging, and the more the boy realizes that you are human like himself, the more he will feel drawn to you, the more unreserved he will be with you. Your very failures will be an incentive and inspiration to him; and, necessarily, the exchange of experiences will bring you two very close together.

The suggested training may encroach somewhat on your leisure time. But there is no better use to which you can put it.

There is involved in the training of your boy a simple, elemental, basic idea of decency. You have your standards of conduct—every right minded man has. You may, or you may not, attain them, but they represent your ambition

for the boy. You want him, first of all, to be a boy in the fullest sense of the word—not one part angel, two parts girl, but a whole-souled, sturdy, virile boy. You want him to be "a good animal" with health exuding at every pore and with good red blood coursing through his veins. You want him to excel in sports and pastimes and all manly activities. You want him to hold his own in his studies. You want him to be big in his aims and ideas, so big that he cannot stoop to anything small or belittling, and you want him to be clean in mind and body, so clean that he will shrink from anything tending to debase himself or degrade another.

No matter what your own inner life may be, these are your aims for your boy, and this is the object of your training.

And you will win out. There may be some set-backs, some lapses. You may not develop a Sir Galahad, but you will give to society an eminently decent, lovable chap; and you will gain for yourself a friend whose companionship will be a source of never-failing pleasure.

"Hand in hand through the woods they go,
The father and little lad;
Happy are all the youngsters who know
That a boy's best chum is his dad.

"Hand in hand through the world they go,
Sharing each other's joy;
Happy are all the fathers who know
That a man's best chum is his boy."[1]

THE END

[1] Hal Coffman—In *New York Evening Journal.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS OF
YOUTH AND OPPORTUNITY

EQUIPMENT.

I. The Point of View.
II. The Conduct of Life.
III. Mind and Body.
IV. Environment.
V. The Essential Education.

EFFICIENCY.

VII. The Basis of Success in Business.
VIII. The Value of a Man's Time.
IX. Work and Efficiency.
X. Types and Dreamers.
XI. A Dreamer in Action.
XII. The Golden Key.

CULTURE.

XIII. What is Culture?
XIV. The Art of Reading.
XV. The Reading Hour.
XVI. The Best Books.
XVII. The Revival of Learning.

ACTIVITY.

XVIII. Getting a Living.
XIX. What Money Means.
XX. Building a Fortune.
XXI. Odd Moments.
XXII. Citizenship.

RESOURCES.

XXIII Freedom.
XXIV. Ability.
XXV. Perseverance.
XXVI. Happiness.

ACHIEVEMENT.

XXVII. At the Kiln.
XXVIII. In a Laboratory.
XXIX. In a Stone Quary.
XXX. At a Forge.

THE MESSAGE.

XXXI. The Message of Art.
XXXII. The Message of the Humble.

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